



State of California

Employment Training Panel

CASE STUDY

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor

Adir International, dba La Curacao

Established in 1978 as a door-to-door catalog sales operation, La Curacao employs over 1,100 employees at four retail locations and a warehouse distribution center and has annual sales of over \$20 million. In addition to selling electronics, appliances and furniture, the Los Angeles-based company offers a variety of credit services to a largely Hispanic customer base.

La Curacao is in direct competition with major retailers such as Circuit City, Sears, and Best Buy, who are able to expend considerable resources to attract the consumers who have historically been loyal to La Curacao's products. In order to remain competitive, the company determined that more extensive training was necessary to improve customer service and increase efficiency and productivity.

Historically, La Curacao's training had been limited to orientation and occasional on-the-job exercises. The company's new vision, however, included advanced training programs that stress consistent and superior customer service. ETP-funded training focused on continuous improvement and management skills, vocational English as a second language, and computer literacy. Courses were designed to provide skills necessary to improve efficiency and effectiveness, and, as a result, customer service and sales skills improved dramatically.

The results were immediate – increased sales were maintained at 20–30%. Because sales associates consistently reached sales goals following training completion, company management is convinced that the training program has played a major role in La Curacao's success.

La Curacao trained 387 employees, and earned \$406,380 in ETP funds. More importantly, however, the ETP-funded training brought about a cultural change within the company, where developing employee skills and training became a more crucial element in the day-to-day business operations. As a result, the company established "La Curacao University", and initiated a significant training program.

Because of La Curacao's experience with ETP, the company is highly committed to training and employee development; a commitment which has resulted in the creation of more jobs through the establishment of several new stores in Southern California.

"ETP gave us the economic means by which we were able to effectively train our associates into a competitive retail workforce. This has enabled us to grow by double digit numbers when almost everyone else is struggling. Thank You ETP."

**Mike Ledesma, Vice President
La Curacao**

For information regarding the ETP program, call ETP's Economic Development Unit at 916/327-5640 or e-mail edu@etp.ca.gov

(lacuracao05)